

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 MOSCOW 06771 01 OF 02 051236Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----122041 051239Z /10

P 051228Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9994

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 MOSCOW 06771

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: UR, US, PARM
SUBJECT: MENDELEVICH VIEWS ON MAR 4 ROUND OF CAT TALKS

REF: STATE 080818

SUMMARY: AMBASSADOR MET WITH MENDELEVICH APRIL 4 TO GET LATTER'S PRELIMINARY COMMENTS ON HELSINKI ROUND OF CAT TALKS. MENDELEVICH AVOIDED SPECIFIC COMMENTS, STICKING TO GENERAL OBSERVATIONS ON U.S. DECEMBER PRESENTATION AND SOVIET PRESENTATION IN MAY IN HELSINKI. HE RECOGNIZED THAT IT IS SOVIET TURN TO GIVE THEIR VIEWS, AND CLAIMED HIS REMARKS IN HELSINKI WILL BE MORE "POLITICAL/LEGAL" AND LESS "TECHNICAL" THAN U.S. DECEMBER PRESENTATION. END SUMMARY.

1. AMBASSADOR MET WITH AMBASSADOR AT LARGE L. I. MENDELEVICH APRIL 4 TO DELIVER PERSONAL MESSAGE FROM GELB AND TO INQUIRE ABOUT MENDELEVICH'S PRELIMINARY COMMENTS IN ADVANCE OF THE HELSINKI CAT TALKS. MENDELEVICH EXPRESSED SOME SURPRISE AT GELB'S REQUEST FOR HIS COMMENTS, SINCE HE WAS TOLD THAT GELB INFORMED DOBRYNIN A FEW WEEKS AGO THAT THE U.S. WOULD SHORTLY BE PRESENTING ITS PRELIMINARY COMMENTS TO MENDELEVICH. NEVERTHELESS, HE SAID THAT HE WOULD COMMENT ON BOTH THE SUBSTANCE AND THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE CAT TALKS.

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TIVE DETAILS (SEPTTEL) OF THE COMING TALKS.

2. MENDELEVICH SAID THAT THE SOVIET SIDE HAD STUDIED CAREFULLY THE RESULTS OF THE FIRST ROUND AND REALIZED FULLY THAT "THE BALL IS IN SOV COURT." HE SAID THAT HE EXPECTED THE MAIN FOCUS OF THIS ROUND TO BE THE ELABORATION OF THE SOVIET VIEWS, MUCH AS THE MAIN ATTENTION IN THE FIRST ROUND WAS ON THE U.S. POSITION.

THE FIRST ROUND HAD BEEN ON THE U.S. PRESENTATION. THUS, HE EXPECTED THAT AT THE END OF THESE TALKS EACH SIDE WILL BE IN A POSITION TO DECIDE WHETHER OR NOT THE TOPIC IS SUCH AS TO PROVIDE A POSSIBILITY FOR A "COMMON EFFORT" IN LIMITING CONVENTIONAL ARMS TRANSFERS.

3. MENDELEVICH CHARACTERIZED THE U.S. PRESENTATION IN DECEMBER AS "PRIMARILY TECHNICAL" AND SAID THAT IN THE SOVIET OPINION ONE MUST ALSO EXAMINE THE "POLITICAL AND LEGAL" POINT OF VIEW. HE DID NOT MEAN BY THIS TO DISPARAGE THE NECESSITY OF THE "TECHNICAL" SIDE BUT THAT HE EXPECTED TO BE INSTRUCTED TO ELABORATE THE "POLITICAL AND LEGAL" ASPECTS OF THE ISSUE "AS WE SEE THEM." MENDELEVICH SAID THAT THE SOVIETS CONSIDER THAT THE PROBLEM OF ARMS TRANSFER MUST BE CONSIDERED FROM BOTH THESE POINTS OF VIEW. HE ALSO SAID THAT HE SAW TWO ASPECTS TO THE PROBLEM: THE QUESTION OF "WHAT" IS TO BE LIMITED AND "TO WHOM" THE LIMITATIONS WOULD APPLY. (COMMENT. IT SEEMED THAT MENDELEVICH WAS REFORMULATING THE TECHNICAL VS. THE POLITICAL/LEGAL ASPECTS IN THIS LATTER CHARACTERIZATION, I.E., THE "WHAT" IS TECHNICAL, BUT THE "TO WHOM" IS POLITICAL/LEGAL. END COMMENT.)

4. HE ASKED THE AMBASSADOR TO BE SURE TO PASS ON TO DR. GELB THAT HE EXPECTED THE DISCUSSIONS TO TAKE PLACE
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IN A VERY CONSTRUCTIVE ATMOSPHERE AND THAT THE SOVIET SIDE WISHED TO EXAMINE SERIOUSLY THE ISSUE TO SEE WHAT THE PROBLEM IS AND WHAT THE REQUIRED ACTION MAY BE. THE AMBASSADOR INTERJECTED THAT GELB WAS VERY SERIOUS ABOUT THESE TALKS AND, AS MENDELEVICH WELL KNEW, THE PRESIDENT HAD SPOKEN OUT STRONGLY IN SUPPORT OF CONVENTIONAL ARMS TRANSFERS.

5. AMBASSADOR TOON SPECIFICALLY ASKED MENDELEVICH FOR HIS REACTION TO THE FOUR POSSIBLE FORMS WHICH CAT RESTRAINT MIGHT TAKE, AS OUTLINED IN THE GELB-KHLESTOV NON-PAPER OF LAST JANUARY. MENDELEVICH RESPONDED THAT THE SOVIET SIDE WOULD ASK ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS AND OTHER ASPECTS OF THE U.S. PRESENTATION IN THE MAY MEETINGS. HE SAID, HOWEVER, THAT THE SOVIETS DO NOT HAVE ANY OBJECTION TO THESE FOUR APPROACHES BUT WOULD LIKE TO KNOW MORE ABOUT HOW THE AMERICAN SIDE ENVISAGED IMPLEMENTATION.

6. WHAT IS MOST IMPORTANT IN THE SOVIET VIEW, ACCORDING TO MENDELEVICH, IS THAT BOTH SIDES COME TO A DEFINITION OF THE LEGAL BASIS OF CONVENTIONAL ARMS

TRANSFERS AND THE PURPOSE FOR WHICH TRANSFERS TAKE
PLACE. ALSO THEY SHOULD DEVOTE ATTENTION TO WHAT
CONSTITUTES UNDESIRABLE ARMS TRANSFERS. THE SOVIET
SIDE BELIEVES THAT THE PRINCIPLES FOR THIS PROCESS OF
DEFINITION ARE ESTABLISHED IN THEIR POSITION.
(COMMENT. THIS APPEARED TO BE A REFERENCE ON MENDELE-
VICH'S PART TO THE STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES BY KHLESTOV
IN THE DECEMBER MEETINGS. END COMMENT.)

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S E C R E T SECTION 02 OF 02 MOSCOW 06771
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7. EMBASSY WILL BE COMMENTING IN MORE DETAIL PER
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